




Yuma County, Arizona
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Interpretation File

FROM: Monty M. Stansbury, Planning Director 

SUBJECT: Interpretation; are mini-horses considered to be a farm animal

DATE: September 26, 2003

Within the Yuma County Zoning Ordinance the following term is defined.

Domestic Farm-Type Animals: Horses, cattle, sheep, goats, mules, burros, poultry, rabbits and swine or other cleft-hoof domestic animals.

Within the Glossary of Zoning, Development and Planning Terms, edited by M. Davidson and F. Dolnick, dated 1999, it offers the following definitions:

Farm Animal – Any animal that customarily is raised for profit on farms and has the potential of causing a nuisance if not properly maintained (*Pomfret Township, N.Y.*)

Exotic Animal – Any member of a species of animal, reptile or bird, warm or cold blooded, that is not indigenous to the environs of the parish and/or is not classified or considered as wildlife, livestock or domestic animal. (*Jefferson Parish, La.*)

Exotic Animal – Any wild animal not customarily confined or cultivated by man for domestic or commercial purposes but rather kept as a pet or for display. (*Manhattan Beach, CA*)

Livestock – Generally accepted outdoor farm animals (i.e., cows, goats, horses, pigs, barnyard fowl, etc.) not to include cats, dogs and other house pets. (*Valdez, AK*)

Livestock – "... (2) all horses, mules, burros, and asses or animals of the equine species; ..." (*Washoe County, Nev.*)

Small Livestock – Livestock under 250 pounds and older than six months.
(Valdez, AK)

Small Livestock – Hogs, excluding pigs weighing under 120 pounds and standing 20 inches or less at the shoulder which are kept as household pets or small animals, sheep, goats, miniature horses, llamas, alpaca, and other livestock generally weighing under 500 pounds. (King County, WA)

The Guide Horse Foundation provides the following information.

The Mission:

Our mission is to provide a safe, cost-effective and reliable mobility alternative for visually impaired people and to deliver trained Guide Horses at no cost to the recipient. We also have the goal of helping the tiny horses by providing them with a higher-purpose in life.

The Program:

The Guide Horse Foundation was founded in 1999 as an experimental program to access the abilities of miniature horses as assistance animals. There is a critical shortage of guide animals for the blind.

In early experiments, Guide Horses have shown great promise as a mobility option, and people who have tried Guide Horses report that the Guide Horses perform exceptionally well at keeping their person safe. These friendly horses provide an alternative mobility option for blind people. People who have tried Guide Horses report that the horses demonstrate excellent judgment and are not easily distracted by crowds and people.

Guide horses are not for everyone, but there is a strong demand for Guide Horses among blind horse lovers, those who are allergic to dogs, and those who want a guide animal with a long lifespan.

Why use a mini horse?

There are many compelling reasons to use miniature horses as guide animals. Horses are natural guide animals and have been guiding humans for centuries. In nature, horses have been shown to possess a natural guide instinct. When another horse goes blind in a herd, a sighted horse accepts responsibility for the welfare of the blind horse and guides it with the herd. With humans, many blind people ride horses in equestrian competitions. Some blind people ride alone on

trails for many miles, completely relying on the horse to guide them safely to their destination. Through history, Cavalry horses have been known to guide their

injured rider to safety. The Guide Horse Foundation finds several characteristics of horses that make them suitable to guide the blind:

- **Long Lifespan** - Miniature Horse can live to be more than 50 years old, with the average lifespan being 30-40 years. According to guide dog trainers, guide dogs have a useful life between 8-12 years.
- **Cost Effective** - Training a guide dog can cost up to \$60,000, according to the Guide Dog Users national advocacy group. According to Lighthouse International, there are more than 1.3 million legally blind people in the USA, yet only 7,000 guide animal users. Hence, a Guide Horse can be more cost-effective and ensure that more blind people receive a guide animal.
- **Calm Nature** - Trained horses are extremely calm in chaotic situations. Cavalry horses have proven that horses can remain calm even in the extreme heat of battle. Police horses are an excellent example of well trained horses that deal with stressful situations. Guide Horses undergo the same systematic desensitization training that is given to riot-control horses.
- **Great Memory** - Horses possess phenomenal memories. A horse will naturally remember a dangerous situation decades after the occurrence.
- **Excellent Vision** - Because horses have eyes on the sides of their heads, they have a very wide range of vision, with a range of nearly 350 degrees. They also have outstanding night vision and can see clearly in almost total darkness.

- **Focused Demeanor** - Trained horses are very focused on their work and are not easily distracted. Horses are not addicted to human attention and normally do not get excited when petted or groomed.
- **Safety Conscious** - Naturally safety oriented, horses are constantly on the lookout for danger. All horses have a natural propensity to guide their master along the safest most efficient route, and demonstrate excellent judgment in obstacle avoidance training.
- **High Stamina** - Hearty and robust, a properly conditioned Guide Horse can easily travel many miles in a single outing.
- **Good Manners** - Guide Horses are very clean and can be housebroken. Horses do not get fleas and only shed twice per year. Horses are not addicted to human affection and will stand quietly when on duty.

The American Miniature Horse

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History & Development

Colorful myths abound about the origin of the Miniature horse. Contemporary historians tend to support the breed as a derivative of many sources. In pre-historic times, small horse breeds were likely the products of surviving harsh natural climates and limited feed. Too, with knowledge of genetics, it is possible to breed specifically for size. It is known that, at various times in equine history, Miniature horses have been bred for pets, novelty, research, monetary gain, mining work, exhibition, and royal gifts. In addition to the pre-historic evidence of small equids, it is speculated that the Miniature horse is a result of nearly 400 years of selective breeding of many extracts.

The first mention of a small horse being imported to the United States was in 1888; and it appears, there was little public awareness of true Miniatures during the year preceding 1960. It is believed that the American Miniature horse utilized the blood of the English and Dutch mine horses brought to this country in the 19th century and used in some Appalachian coal mines as late as 1950. The American Miniature horse, as documented in the pedigrees of some Miniatures today, also drew upon the blood of the Shetland pony.

In 1978, the American Miniature Horse Association, Inc., was organized to aid and encourage the breeding use and perpetuation of the American Miniature horse, separate and apart from ponies and other small equines. According to the AMHA's Rules and Regulations and Bylaws, an animal exceeding 34 inches in height is not eligible for registration with the Association. To date, AMHA has registered over 114,000 Miniature horses.

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Significant Facts For A Newcomer To Know

- 1) Basic horse knowledge. Miniature horses are horses with the same reactions and motivations as large size horses. While Miniatures tend to be affectionate and easy to handle, as with all equines, temperaments and abilities vary by the individual. Before purchasing, it is important for a newcomer to consider his/her level of experience and abilities with horses and what he/she plans to do as a Miniature owner. For someone new to horses or limited physically, it may be wise to shop for a mature, well-trained Mini.
- 2) Research. Learn about the breed. Visit reputable breeders. Request information from the American Miniature Horse Association. Visit the AMHA and Miniature Farms' websites. Read the Miniature Horse World Magazine. Locate and attend Miniature Horse shows.
- 3) Maintaining a Miniature Horse is about 1/10th the cost of maintaining a large size horse. One acre can support as many as three Miniature horses. Mini's tend to thrive on pasture, sunshine and room to run and play. They are also prone to overeating, so it's important to monitor their nutritional needs and avoid excessive food intake.
- 4) Miniature horses should never be ridden by any but the smallest children; however, they are adept at learning, to drive. A variety of driving classes are important and popular elements in all AMHA- approved shows.
- 5) Once someone has held a 17"-21" Miniature foal, that person will never be the same. Miniature babies tend to be affectionate, curious and too cute to resist!

Weighing your Mini

Heart girth in inches = body weight in pounds

30" = 69.33 lbs.	44" = 253.85 lbs.	58" = 438.37 lbs.
31" = 82.51 lbs.	45" = 267.03 lbs.	59" = 451.55 lbs.
32" = 95.69 lbs.	46" = 280.21 lbs.	60" = 464.73 lbs.
33" = 108.87 lbs.	47" = 293.39 lbs.	61" = 477.91 lbs.
34" = 122.05 lbs.	48" = 306.57 lbs.	62" = 491.09 lbs.
35" = 135.23 lbs.	49" = 319.75 lbs.	63" = 504.27 lbs.
36" = 148.41 lbs.	50" = 332.93 lbs.	64" = 517.45 lbs.
37" = 161.59 lbs.	51" = 346.11 lbs.	65" = 530.63 lbs.
38" = 174.77 lbs.	52" = 359.29 lbs.	66" = 543.81 lbs.
39" = 187.95 lbs.	53" = 372.47 lbs.	67" = 556.99 lbs.
40" = 201.13 lbs.	54" = 385.65 lbs.	68" = 570.17 lbs.
41" = 214.31 lbs.	55" = 398.83 lbs.	69" = 583.35 lbs.
42" = 227.49 lbs.	56" = 412.01 lbs.	
43" = 240.67 lbs.	57" = 425.19 lbs.	

A conversation with the University of Arizona, Agricultural Extension Office (Mr. Tim Cook), and his comment was that mini horses are not considered livestock. On the other hand, Deputy Inspector Amaral spoke with a lady named Rhonda from the State Department of Agriculture and they indicate that mini horses are considered to be livestock. When asking the question to the Humane Society about if their services would be rendered in picking up a stray miniature horse, they indicated that the Livestock inspector would perform that service and not their office.

Therefore it is determined that a miniature horse is a form of livestock and as such would be construed to be a farm-type animal and treated accordingly as though having the same attributes of the standard common equine species.